

**CHILD PLACEMENT REVIEW BOARD  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
OPEN SESSION MINUTES  
APRIL 8, 2016  
SMYRNA STATE SERVICE CENTER  
9:30 A.M-12:30 P.M**

**Members Present:** Neal Tash, Judy Mellen, Bonnie Maull, Joe Dell'Olio, Barbara Blair, Bob Hamilton, Mike Norton, Cindy Montejo, Cheryl Mitchell

**Members Absent:** Alexis Bryan-Dorsey

**Chair of Meeting:** Neal Tash

**Staff Present:** Amy Wilburn, Sarah Bowers

**Invited Guest:** Kecia Blackson, CPRB Executive Director designate

**Deputy Attorney General Present:** Valerie Farnan

**\*\*OPEN SESSION BEGAN AT 9:33 A.M\*\***

KECIA BLACKSON WAS INTRODUCED AS THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHILD PLACEMENT REVIEW BOARD. KECIA OFFICIALLY JOINS CPRB ON APRIL 18, 2016. KECIA REPLACES JULIA PEARCE, WHO RESIGNED IN DECEMBER 2015.

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 11, 2016**

The minutes from the March 11, 2016 meeting were reviewed and three changes were requested. The first change, at the request of Judy Mellen, was to Section E., Data Update. Judy requested to update the 7<sup>th</sup> bullet point to reflect that she, Neal Tash, Joe Dell'Olio and Barbara Blair were able to secure a guarantee from the Director and Deputy Director of the Statistical Analysis Center and Criminal Justice Council to include information on youth in foster care in their annual report on recidivism. The second change, requested by Barbara Blair, was to Section G., Annual Meeting update, 5<sup>th</sup> bullet point. Barbara recommended the sentence be re-worded to "Barbara Blair noted our Annual Report is unique because it includes useful information so legislators will refer to it". Judy Mellen requested a third change concerning Action Items. The Action Items were moved to the front of the agenda/minutes starting with the March 2016 minutes. However, Judy would also like to see the Action Items made bold within the context of the minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes pending these three changes. The motion was approved unanimously.

**\*\*\*BEGIN CLOSED SESSION AT 9:42 A.M\*\*\***

**II. PETITION CASES**

*Discussions regarding petition cases are confidential and not open to the public.  
Separate meeting minutes were prepared for the closed session.*

### III. OLD BUSINESS

#### ACTION ITEMS:

- Amy Wilburn will draft a thank-you note to Jill Rogers, the Director of Developmental Disabilities Services. By sending such letters we show our appreciation and acknowledge people who go above and beyond on our behalf.
- Neal Tash asked Amy if by October we could get the statistics of those children about to age out of the system who potentially are falling through the cracks. The Executive Committee and the new Executive Director hope to identify any trends and possibly consider integrating this into our (future) Strategic Plan. Amy stated to do this would require further definition. Amy asked the Executive Committee to review the "Comments" section that she will send and get back to her with potential targeted areas of interest. **(Keep as an Action Item until Complete)**
- A strategic planning retreat date will be added to the 5/13/16 Executive Committee meeting agenda.
- Barbara Blair requested Amy send her a print-out of the "Comments" section.
- Executive Committee members requested a copy of the State of Delaware 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan Edition-2016" hand-out. Sarah will send this out prior to the May meeting.
- Neal Tash asked CPRB staff to do preliminary work to determine trends we want to identify, and then present to the Executive Committee at a later date. **(Keep as an Action Item until Complete)**.
- Judy Mellen requested Sarah Bowers send all panel members and Executive Committee members a link to the "Stewards of Children" training sessions held in April to educate citizens on how to identify, prevent and responsibly respond to child abuse.
- Valerie Farnan recommended the new Executive Director and Lisa Cookson call the SBI to determine the next steps to take so that all background checks includes the FBI.
- Neal proposed that going forward the Executive Director will determine which CPRB staff members should attend future Executive Committee monthly meetings.
- Barbara requested Amy Wilburn provide the Executive Committee a listing of the community partners who should be invited to the Annual Meeting.
- Kecia Blackson, Cindy Montejo and Cheryl Mitchell will identify someone to assist with the Annual Report, and provide an update at the May Executive Committee meeting.
- Add targeted recruiting to May's Agenda.
- Cheryl Mitchell noticed an error to Sussex 3 board assignments. Ruth Tull is not the Presiding Officer; Cheryl Mitchell is. Amy will correct this error.
- Amy will provide an update regarding Barb Pietropaulo's leave of absence at the May Executive Committee meeting.
- Amy will provide an update of the Admin. Specialist I position (Sarah's previous position) at the May Executive Committee meeting.
- Within the context of the minutes Sarah will bold Action Items so they stand out.
- Joe will call Linda Shannon of DFS and Kim Warren (the new program manager of foster care) to follow-up on Skype feasibility during reviews.
- Amy suggested CPRB reach out to DFS to include some of their statistics in our Annual Report. Amy will follow-up with DFS.

#### A. FINANCIAL REPORT

- Due to Alexis Bryan-Dorsey's absence, Neal Tash reported Alexis will send any budget info she has in advance of the May Executive Committee meeting, and present at the May meeting.

#### B. DATA UPDATE

- Joe Dell'Olio reported he attended a Stakeholders meeting of the State of Delaware 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan, and provided a hand-out (2016 Edition).
- Joe stated he believed the data the State collected and reported was impressive, particularly related to Permanency Measures (p. 10). This prompted a discussion about the State's perceived lack of promotion of child abuse prevention and recognizing the signs of child abuse.
- **Judy Mellen requested Sarah Bowers send all panel members and Executive Committee members a link to the "Stewards of Children" training sessions held in April, that educates citizens on how to identify, prevent and responsibly respond to child abuse.**
- **Amy Wilburn reported she is meeting with Sam Gusakov, Sr. App Support IT Specialist, on April 18<sup>th</sup> to correct some database issues CPRB is having.**
- Amy reported she met with Tom Mraz, Info. Systems Project Lead, on March 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss CPRB's data requirements. Tom suggested Amy first develop a flow-chart to capture our work process. Once Tom reviews the flowchart, he will be in a better position to make recommendations and offer assistance.
- Judy Mellen inquired if we could add a data field for information on YRS youth. Amy explained any enhancements need to wait until Tom of Info. Systems has a better idea of how our current process/database works.
- Amy suggested CPRB reach out to DFS to include some of their statistics in our Annual Report. **Amy will follow-up with DFS.**

#### C. CPRB LEGISLATION/JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

- Joe Dell'Olio provided a hand-out of the proposed Delaware State CPRB Senate Bill. Joe reported we have 16 sponsors, with our main sponsor being Sen. McDowell.
- Joe reported some potential "bad" news. Sen. McDowell's staff gave our Bill to a Senate staff attorney to review and "clean up", which is the usual protocol. However, Joe noticed when comparing the revised Bill to the Code, the lawyer had updated Code 7, deleting language pertaining to the administration of the Ivyane D. F. Davis Scholarship Fund, and inserted a new Code 7. We are not certain if this was an oversight or intentional.

#### D. ANNUAL MEETING 2016/ANNUAL REPORT

- The Annual Meeting will take place on October 27, 2016.
- The Executive Committee voted in favor of selecting Modern Maturity as the location for the Annual Meeting and making a \$500.00 deposit to reserve the location. Modern Maturity was chosen because of its size and central location.
- Amy Wilburn reported Dr. Joseph Crumbley, author, consultant and therapist, agreed to be the featured speaker. Joe will speak from 10 a.m. to noon on the topics of kinship care and

transracial adoptions. He will also touch on how to engage birth parents in relative placements and how to deal with family dynamics.

- Amy reported the facility rent will be \$1,000.00 (this does not cover food costs). Food costs are approximately \$25 per person. We are expecting an approximate total cost of \$4,200.00 (this would include food).
- In response to Barbara Blair's inquiry as to who are the community partners, Amy noted the community is made up of DFS, PBHS, YRS, Judges, CASA members, Office of Child Advocate members, etc.
- **Barbara requested Amy Wilburn provide the Executive Committee a listing of community partners.**
- Amy reported the expenditures for Ashlin Bray's assistance on the Annual Report. In 2013, we paid Ashlin \$3,445.00 for design, layout and printing services. In 2014, we paid Ashlin \$4,585.00 for Annual Report assistance and \$2,420.00 for Ashlin's CPRB Retreat preparation and attendance.
- Cheryl Mitchell updated the Executive Committee that her friend is unable to assist with the Annual Report, but Cheryl suggests we secure the services of a professional with experience working on annual reports.
- The Executive Committee agreed the total for professional services for the Annual Report should not exceed \$6,000.
- Kecia Blackson and Cindy Montejo mentioned they both have someone in mind to help with the Annual Report.
- **Kecia Blackson, Cindy Montejo and Cheryl Mitchell will locate someone to assist with the Annual Report, and provide an update at the May Executive Committee meeting.**

#### **E. BOARD MEMBER STATUS**

- Amy Wilburn notified the Executive Committee the background checks process for board members contains a gap. Board members are able to be fingerprinted at the State Police level (State Bureau of Investigation/SBI), but board members are not able to be fingerprinted at the FBI level.
- Amy reported we are currently holding the fingerprints that have so far come into our office until a decision has been made.
- Valerie Farnan noted she was able to be fingerprinted at both SBI and FBI levels, and that under current legislation, Code Sec. 16, 3804D, it is a requirement for board members to undergo fingerprinting at both the local and national level. Valerie noted it is possible because the Child Placement Review Board is not part of a criminal justice agency, this may be the reason why FBI fingerprinting is not covered for CPRB board members.
- Bob Hamilton suggested a policy be implemented.
- Joe Dell'Olio suggested a CPRB staff member set up an account with the State Police so the police know to forward the fingerprints onto the FBI and the cost will be covered.
- **Valerie recommended the new Executive Director and Lisa Cookson call the SBI to determine the next steps to take so all background checks include the FBI.**
- Amy provided the Executive Committee a hand-out of the March 2016 Volunteer Committee Assignments.
- Amy reported NC9 panel has been suspended indefinitely. NC4 is now reviewing YRS cases.

- Amy noted Barb Pietropaulo of NC9 is on her second leave of absence, and most likely will not return. Barbara Blair quoted the Policy manual regarding leave of absences and inquired as to why she was not unappointed.
- Amy explained Boards and Commissions almost never unappoints anyone. In Barb's situation, Amy notified Barb she has until 4/30/16 to decide if she's returning. If she is unable to return, she must retire from her position. Barb agreed. **Amy will provide an update on Barb's leave of absence at the May Executive Committee meeting.**
- **Cheryl Mitchell noticed an error to Sussex 3 board assignments. Ruth Tull is not the Presiding Officer; Cheryl Mitchell is. Amy will correct this error.**
- Cindy Montejo noted Jean King of Kent 1 requested pictures of panel members so she can display at various senior centers to reflect community involvement. The Executive Committee approved this request. This prompted discussion of targeted recruiting and the different channels we use (newspaper, VolunteerMatch.com).
- **Add targeted recruiting to May's Agenda.**

#### F. CPRB PROFESSIONAL STAFF

- Neal Tash suggested that because CPRB staff have been overextended with staff shortages, they should not be required to attend the Executive Committee monthly meetings unless needed to report on a case.
- Neal proposed going forward the new Executive Director determine which CPRB staff members are required to attend future Executive Committee monthly meetings.
- Amy updated the Executive Committee on the Administrative Specialist I position, previously held by Sarah. The position has been posted through 4/25/16.
- Gabrielle Jenkins is the temp contracted through 4/30/16. She has applied for the position. Amy reported she and the new Executive Director will review all applications first to determine the quality of candidates, and decide which candidates will be interviewed.
- **Amy will provide an update of the Administrative Specialist I position at May's Executive Committee meeting.**
- The CPRB has submitted a deposit for Jess Johnston and Denise Partridge to attend the Orlando foster care conference in May. The total cost for both of them is \$1,260.00 This covers conference fees, hotel, per diem, and air fare.
- Barbara Blair reported that Pat Griffin, who manages Family Court, commented at a Joint Finance Committee hearing that Family Court had recommended that CPRB be "Sunsetted", which indicated that animosity still exists. Barbara suggested to Neal Tash and Kecia Blackson it would be to our benefit to be proactive and meet in person with Pat so we can allay any concerns she has and learn more about our advocacy efforts.

#### G. STRATEGIC PLAN

- Because Alexis Bryan-Dorsey was not present at this meeting, this topic was tabled until the May Executive Committee meeting.
- **A strategic planning retreat date will be added to the 5/13/16 Executive Committee meeting agenda.**

#### IV. NEW BUSINESS

##### A. SKYPE USAGE DURING REVIEWS

- Neal Tash asked about the feasibility of using Skype during reviews.
- Judy Mellen commented she thought it was important to be able to read one's body language, which we currently are not able to do during teleconference review calls.
- Joe Dell'Olio suggested Skype should be added to the contracts for out-of-state agencies and YRS kids. It was noted Linda Shannon of DFS thinks it's a great idea.
- **Joe will call Linda Shannon and Kim Warren (the new program manager of foster care) to follow-up on Skype feasibility during reviews.**

#### V. COMMITTEES

- Neal Tash suggested selecting members to various committees at the next Annual Meeting in October.
- Barbara Blair questioned the need for a mental health committee if we are unable to obtain viable information or support, and inquired if we need two separate education and mental health committees. Can they be linked?
- Judy Mellen opined that mental health and education intersect, and voiced her support for a combined education and mental health committee.
- Due to time constraints, the Executive Committee agreed to table this discussion until a future Executive Committee meeting.

#### VI. MINUTES FORMAT

- The Executive Committee approved, at Judy Mellen's request, making bold the action items within the context of the minutes.

**\*\*THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:05 P.M. \*\***

*THE NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE AT THE  
SMYRNA STATE SERVICE CENTER  
ON MAY 13, 2016*